THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (c) Ministry of Tribal Affairs has formulated a draft National Tribal Policy, 2007 in order to address the issues concerning tribals *viz.* lower Human Development Index, poor infrastructure, diminishing control over the natural resource base, persistent threats of eviction from their natural habitat, exclusion from mainstream society, inequality in distribution of wealth and opportunities, non-empowerment and inadequate implementation of constitutional provisions, and to ensure their active and informed participation in development. The policy aims at ensuring access of the Scheduled Tribes to mainstream education, healthcare and income generation to improve the quality of their life. Action has already been taken for its finalization as per procedure. No time-frame can be given at this stage.

Representation by Medana community

2274. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a representation is pending with Government to forward the study of Medana community of Andhra Pradesh to Andhra Pradesh Government for their views;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have received this study about Medanas of the State from the Mysore office of the Anthropological Survey of India nearly a year ago;

(c) if so, the reasons for the lack of action;

(d) by when Government would forward the report to get the views from the State Government; and

(e) the steps proposed to expedite this matter?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) No, Sir. But a representation enclosing a study conducted by the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) on the Medari community of Andhra Pradesh was received. The AnSI was then requested to confirm the study.

(b) to (e) The report from the AnSI, Kolkata recently received in this Ministry has been forwarded to the Andhra Pradesh Government for necessary action.

Inclusion of Banjara and Anwal in tribal community

†2275. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a request from Uttarakhand Government to include social groups like Banjara and Anwal in the tribal community;

(b) whether Government are aware that both these social groups fall under the roving tribal community (Ghumantoo) and there has been a demand to include them among tribes for a long time; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regard and by when the said social groups would be recognised as tribes?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) and (b) There were demands for inclusion of Banjara and Anwal communities in the Scheduled Tribes list of undivided Uttar Pradesh. A request has been received from the State Government of Uttarakhand for inclusion of Banjara community in Scheduled Tribes list of Uttarakhand, but the State Government of Uttarakhand did not recommend the inclusion of Anwal community in ST list of Uttarakhand. Proposals for inclusion of a community in the list of Scheduled Tribes are considered on the following criteria (i) Indications of primitive traits, (ii) Distinctive culture, (iii) Geographical isolation, (iv) Shyness of contact with the community at large, and (v) Backwardness. The Government in June, 1999, had approved these modalities for deciding claims for inclusion in and exclusion from and other modifications in the Orders specifying Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lists, which requires consent of the concerned State Government, Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.

(c) The proposal of Banjara community for inclusion in Scheduled Tribes list of Uttarakhand has been processed, as per the approved modalities, which requires consensus of the three aforementioned agencies and this takes time. Therefore, no specific time-frame can be mentioned at present.

Decline in living stadards of Vanrawats and Buxa in Uttarakhand

†2276. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is constant decline in the standards of living of 'Vanrawats' a primitive tribe and Buxa, a Scheduled Tribe in Uttarakhand and the infant mortality rate and the average age amongst them is also on the decline; and

(b) if so, the details of the measures being taken to improve their living standards and the amount proposed to be spent thereon during 2007-08?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI. P. R. KYNDIAH): (a) The notified Scheduled Tribes of Uttarakhand are Bhotia, Buksa, Jaunsari, Raji and Tharu. But tribe-wise information on standards of living, infant mortality rate and average age is not available.

(b) Does not arise.

Safety of adivasis in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

†2277. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a committee constituted by Government has observed that, due to increasing population and construction activities, the existence of adivasis (tribals) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is in constant danger;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.